

Message Text

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ORIGIN EUR-12

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PA - MR. MEDEIROS

-----044210 100034Z /66

O 092359Z MAR 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO ALL NATO CAPITALS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MADRID IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY VALLETTA IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS STATE 061361

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SOPN, IT

SUBJECT: NOON BRIEFING ON ITALY

1. THERE FOLLOWS AN EXTRACT ON ITALY FROM THE MARCH 9
NOON BRIEFING. FYI. BRIEFER WAS TOM RESTON.

2. QUOTE:

Q. TOM, DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING THERE THAT YOU CAN READ TO
US ABOUT THE U.S. REACTION TO THE ELECTIONS IN ITALY
AND THE FACT THAT THE ITALIAN COMMUNISTS --

A. DO YOU MEAN THE ELECTIONS?

Q. I DON'T MEAN "ELECTIONS" -- THE FACT THAT THE ITALIAN
COMMUNISTS ARE NOT GETTING CABINET POSTS BUT ARE TAKING
GOVERNMENT -- DOES THAT EASE YOUR FEARS OF EURO-COMMUNISM
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-- OR MAKE YOU MORE NERVOUS ABOUT EURO-COMMUNISM?

A. NO, BARRY, I WAS ASKED THAT QUESTION YESTERDAY AND
I HAVE NO COMMENT. AND I AM STILL THERE TODAY.

Q. WHAT IS THE SITUATION? IS THE DEPARTMENT ANALYZING
THE SITUATION IN ITALY AT THIS POINT? OR IS IT NOT

COMMENTING BECAUSE IT'S AN INTERNAL DEVELOPMENT?

A. I AM JUST NOT IN A POSITION TO TELL YOU WHY I'M NOT COMMENTING.

Q. WELL TOM, WILL YOU HAVE SOMETHING AT 2:00 OR 3:00 O'CLOCK? I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN WHEN YOU SAY YOU ARE "NOT IN A POSITION", TOM. DO YOU MEAN YOU HAVE NOTHING? OR ARE YOU GOING TO BE OVERTAKEN BY EVENTS -- IS WHAT I MEAN.

A. NO. NO. I HAVE GUIDANCE THAT SAYS: "DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENT ABOUT THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN ITALY"? AND THE ANSWER IS TODAY, AS IT WAS YESTERDAY: "NO."

Q. BUT TOM, THE DEPARTMENT ISSUED HERE, OVER THE PAST YEAR, TWO POLICY STATEMENTS ON EURO-COMMUNISM. WHY CAN'T YOU NOW COMMENT NOW THAT THE ELECTIONS ARE OVER? (SIC)

A. WELL IN THE FIRST PLACE, THEY ARE NOT -- IT'S THE FORMATION OF A GOVERNMENT THAT WE ARE TALKING ABOUT AND THAT PROCESS IS NOT COMPLETE. THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOT, IN FACT, BEEN FORMED.

Q. SO YOU WILL HAVE A STATEMENT.

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A. THIS IS A PARLIAMENTARY SITUATION AT THE MOMENT AND THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOT BEEN FORMED; AND I HAVE NO COMMENT ON THE VARIOUS ARRANGEMENTS WHICH ARE BEING MADE IN ROME NOW.

Q. TOM, IS YOUR STATEMENT OF JANUARY 12 STILL GOOD?

A. YES.

Q. THAT STATEMENT WOULD SEEM TO DISAPPROVE OF WHAT IS NOW HAPPENING. IS THAT CORRECT?

A. OUR STATEMENT STANDS. END QUOTE. VANCE

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